

Washington's Bible Says He Was Born on Feb. 11

OLD records—what stories they can tell. Sometimes full of romance, sometimes startling in their disclosures. It would seem that Washington's birthday, observed for so many years on February 22, was a celebration founded securely on accurate historical facts.

But Historians Now Say it Was February 22, and They Are Right in Their Way—When Was Birthday First Celebrated?—An Agreement of President Wilson and Senator Lodge.

1776	7	Mar	Laurel
1776	To account for Jones	1779-9-8	1779-9-8
1776	To Exp. in visiting the		
	defunct islands in		
	Boston harbor after		
	the evacuation of the		
	Town by the enemy		
4	To M. P. Weston for back		
	of his acc. as steward		
	to the date of my last		
	Cambridge for New York		
	To Harbor in Feb.		
	To Washington		
6	To Cash paid for		
	Coke at Providence		
	To M. P. Weston for copy		
	under at three		
13	To Expenses on the road		
	from Cambridge to New		
	York by the way of Pro		
	vidence of the above		
	M. P. Weston's acc.		
	To Date paid by myself		
	in Providence de		
	duction of the above		
	To the Expenses of Major		
	Carry & Bayler my aid		
	detachment in the upper		
	in common Post Road		
	with M. P. Weston		
15	To M. P. Weston for riding		
	Expenses to Providence		
	Hopkins at New London		
	To Expenses of Party of		
	Quida Indians on a		
	visit to me & for the		
	seats for them		
	To am. carr. for	1779-9-8	1779-9-8

COMPLETE ACCOUNTS OF HIS EXPENSES WERE KEPT BY WASHINGTON WHILE COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF. ABOVE IS A FACSIMILE OF A PAGE OF HIS ACCOUNT BOOK FOR APRIL, 1776.

Yet buried in the family Bible of Washington's mother and written in her own handwriting is an entry which makes one pause with surprise. There she has clearly recorded the astounding statement that George Washington was born on February 11.

Certainly no one should know more about this important event than Mrs. Washington.

There it is in black and white in her own handwriting:

"George Washington, son to Augustine and Mary, his wife, was borne ye 11th

of February, 1732, about 10 in the morning, and was baptized the 2d of April following. Mr. Beverly Whiting and Capt. Christopher Brooks, godfathers, and Mrs. Mildred Gregory, godmother."

Family Bibles, especially in those times, were the last word in accuracy, so this statement must be accepted as indisputable.

And yet the 22d is unquestioned as the national celebration of the birthday of our first President. More than that, the two foremost biographers of Wash-

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FAC-SIMILE OF THE ENTRY OF WASHINGTON'S BIRTH IN HIS MOTHER'S BIBLE

ington, Senator Lodge and President Wilson, agree in stating that Washington was born on February 22. Even on cotemporary subjects one or the other of these two statesmen must be right. When they agree their joint statements should be considered correct.

Washington's mother on one side and Lodge and Wilson, united, on the other; here is the mystery.

On second thought the apparent discrepancy is easily solved.

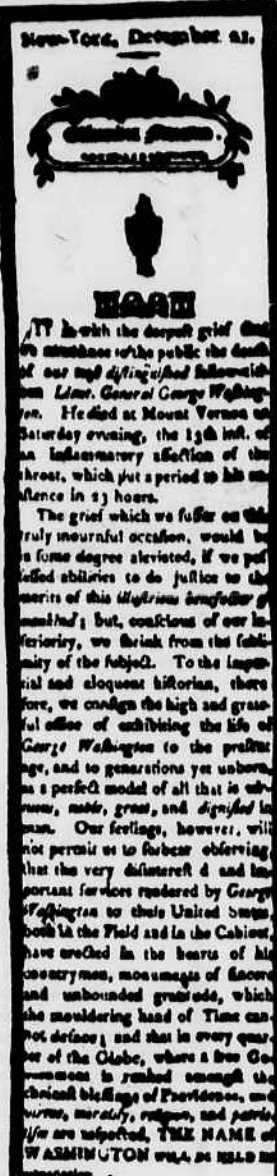
Both sides are right. As it is said, all roads lead to Rome; at least this puzzle ends there. Pope Gregory holds the key.

By the latter part of the sixteenth century the calendar year had become askew with the astronomical year. It seemed important that a readjustment be made and Pope Gregory XIII, after careful consultation with the learned men of his time, decreed that in 1582 ten days should be dropped and arranged what has since been called the Gregorian calendar. The mandate of the Pope was followed that year by Spain, Portugal, Italy and France, but England would have none of it and continued on the basis of the old calendar for another century and a half.

By 1752 in England the discrepancy had mounted up to eleven days, and the disadvantages of two systems of dates was causing great annoyance. It was necessary to date letters going from England or her colonies to France with the days of both systems; for instance, February 11-12. So at last to avoid all this confusion England officially adopted the Gregorian calendar and decreed that eleven days be omitted in the year 1752 between September 3 and September 14.

So for Washington, his birthday in 1753 and all succeeding years fell on February 22. How fortunate young George must have considered himself not to have been born on one of those illusive eleven days which were lost entirely in that momentous year of 1752! How puzzled he would then have been in after years to have known how old he really was!

But there is another record which throws light on what was probably the first public recognition of his birthday. This time the record is in his own handwriting. While commander-in-chief of



AN EDITORIAL CONCERNING THE DEATH OF WASHINGTON IN THE NEW YORK GAZETTE, DECEMBER 21, 1799.

the continental armies, with all his other responsibilities and duties, Washington found time to keep exact records of all his expenses. These expense ac-

counts were several years ago made available by their transferral from the Treasury Department to the Library of Congress, where they were placed with the great collection of Washington's papers there. John C. Fitzpatrick, the assistant chief, manuscript division of the Library of Congress, has issued in a limited edition a facsimile reproduction of part of these expense accounts.

In one of Washington's daily expense account books there is an entry, under date of February 22, 1778, which reads: Cash paid the 22d inst. to Proctor's band by the G. O. 15s

An interpretation of this brief note shows that the band of Col. Proctor's 4th Continental Artillery apparently took it upon itself to serenade the commander-in-chief. This old record brings to light that Valley Forge, with all that that name means of privations and suffering, was the setting where was staged what was undoubtedly the first recognition in any public way of Washington's birthday.

There is still another record of those revolutionary times which touches us perhaps most poignantly today. To the French is credit due for the first public celebration of Washington's birthday. It was in February, 1781, that Comte de Rochambeau, with true French spirit, declared a holiday for the French troops who were then located in Connecticut. Washington's birthday fell that year on Sunday, so the French general specified that the following Monday be set aside for the celebration of the birthday of his commander, whom he so highly esteemed.

It was another of the many evidences of the close ties between France and America which existed in revolutionary times. It was on that memorable occasion that was first laid the foundation of our national holiday.

Good Returners.

RODMAN WANAMAKER said at a dinner in Philadelphia:

"We Americans are the most generous buyers in the world. We are also very lavish in returning to the accommodating dealers the things that we have bought."

"An American traveler was being shown over Warwick Castle."

"This 'ere tower,' his guide told him impressively, 'goes back to William the Conqueror.'"

"Why, what's the matter with it?" said the traveler. "Ain't it satisfactory?"

A Necessary Warning.

AN Army officer was describing the horrible sufferings of Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Courland and Rumania, and the necessity for supplying them with American meat and grain.

A young lady, smiling above a huge fan of ostrich plumes, said:

"Look here, we don't mind feeding those small nations, but for goodness sake tell them to stop fighting between meals!"

RING W. LARDNER'S WEEKLY LETTER

TO the Editor: As you probably read in the papers they've been a lot of flu around here as well as elsewhere but the only bacillidicid witch has bit me so far is the grand opera germ that costs just as much but maybe don't kill as many people though at least 1 and sometimes 2 or 3 of the performers dies in the last act.

Well I told my friends in last wks. issue about seeing Geraldine in poor Butterfly down to the opera house in N. Y. city so the other day the Mrs. made the remark that the Chicago opera singers was at the theater so on acct. of us being from old Chi. you might say why we figured it wasn't no more than fair to go there I night so I looked in the paper and seen where Rosie Raisa was going to play Norma and she is the best soprano singer I ever heard outside of maybe Nora Bayes so I said leave us go and hear her.

So 1 day I couldn't help from being in N. Y. city so I went up to the theater and halled out a roll of bills that would choke a gnat.

"Well" says the bird in the box office "it certainly seems good to see a guy from old Chi. How are you?"

"I wonder if you could fix me up for next Tuesday night for Rosie in Norma" I said sticking my roll back in my thimble.

"You bet I can" said the bird "and if it wasn't going to be a sell out I wouldn't take your money."

I just set this down to show how I stand with birds from old Chi. He took my money but he wouldn't if he could help it.

Well Tuesday night finely come and sure enough it was a sell out and besides every seat being full they was 2 or 3 100 persons parked on their dogs and you had to houndin your way to your seat. Well 2 of the N. Y. music

critics said the next A.M. that it was the 1st time Norma had been sang for 140 yrs. except in Chicago witch of course don't count and the last time it was really sang was by Lilli Lemon in N. Y. city the yr. Lord Cornwallis run for president so any way its a old old story and I guess I may as well tell you what its about.

Well it seems that in the old days when Gallia was omnes divisia in partes tres they was a Elks lodge over there witch they called the druids and the minute you joined them you was exempt from military service and you didn't half to pay no taxes and I guess they didn't have no trouble in increasing their memberships. The only draw backs was that you had to worship a oak tree and live on acorns and you couldn't have no children witch is why pretty near everybody in the show was old geezers with beards.

Well in this show it starts out that the wops have knocked the Galls for a touchdown and gool and they's a bird name Pollio from Roma who has been placed in charge of the druids and it seems like him and Norma who is arch queen of the druids has been married or something and any way they have got 2 children 1 of them 7 yrs. old and the other 9 and on acct. of it being vs. the druids laws to have children, Rosie has kept hers a secret and I will half to slip it to her for so doing, as personally I know something about children and I will give anybody \$900.00 that can keep them a secret 9 minutes to say nothing about 9 yrs.

But I seem to of strayed off of the plot. It seems that this wop Pollio finely gets stuck on another gal Myrna Sharlow and she modestly owns the same up to Rosie so Rosie cusses her but Myrna says she won't



"I'LL GIVE ANY ONE \$900 THAT CAN KEEP THEM A SECRET NINE MINUTES, TO SAY NOTHING OF NINE YEARS."

have nothing more to do with the before I can finish this story. (Laughter and cheers.) Well it seems like the druids is like all other grand

more of the by laws of the druids opera stars and when they want to

express deep emotion they hit themselves with the flat of their hand and they usually pick out a place where it won't hurt namely the top of the head. But that has nothing to do with this story.

Well in atto duo when Rosie found out that Pollio was now stuck on Myrna for some reason another wop decided to kill her children and I have often felt the same way but just couldn't do it when it comes to the pinch and neither could she so they was no kids murdered in this opera but it seems that they was another by law of the druids that if you done something wrong you had to kill yourself and they always had a fire going so you could step into it and burn up so in the last act Rosie owns up to her old man that she has got a couple kids and her and the father of her children steps into the fire and down comes the asbestos curtain so the guys that have paid \$6.00 won't be burnt also and the next idea is to run out and get a taxi for the G. C. depot and try and make the 11:30 train.

I am afraid I haven't described this opera very good but will say its a tough one to tell about and no wonder it takes 140 yrs. to get ready for it and in regards to the music by Bellini why all as I can say is that he stole 3 of his best tunes from Nearer To Thee and So Long Letty and the Mocking Bird.

Next wk. dear editor I will try and not write no more opera stuff unless some bird gives me a pair of tickets without holding out his hand like they was a aftermath or something.

RING W. LARDNER.

Greenwich, Conn., Feb. 20.
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